

System Inspector Manual

CHAPTER 9 - ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibility of the System Inspector is not to the system owner or prospective buyer, but to the public that has entrusted him or her with fairly and objectively evaluating the condition of onsite sewage disposal systems. The inspector should always bear in mind that this is a responsibility that transcends regulations and defines the moral standards under which ethical practice is performed. It is in this frame of mind that the System Inspector should approach system inspections.

The regulations require that an inspection report be prepared on a form approved by the Department. The contents of this form have already been discussed in the Inspection Process section of this manual. It is the inspector's responsibility to fill out the form as completely as possible so that anyone reviewing the report can determine the compliance status of the system in question. While much of the information required on this form can be determined in the field, the inspector will have to spend some office time both before and after the inspection to produce an accurate evaluation of the system.

For any inspection required under the regulations, the System Inspector is required to submit a copy of the inspection report to the approving authority within thirty (30) days of the inspection. The report must be on a Department approved System Inspection Form. For systems with design flows greater than 10,000 gpd and for all shared systems, the inspection report must be submitted to the Department. Inspection reports for title transfers must also be submitted to the buyer or other person acquiring title to the facility served by the system.

A proper inspection requires that the System Inspector exercise best professional effort and due diligence in conducting a complete inspection. As mentioned previously, the inspector should be cognizant of the intent of the inspection regulations as opposed to merely meeting the requirements of the regulations. Essentially, the System Inspector should keep in mind the following:

1. determine if the sewage disposal system triggers any of the failure criteria;
2. alert the owner of potential problems; and
3. attempt to evaluate if the system is functioning properly.

The regulations specifically address item 1 above; however, experience and professional judgment should guide the System Inspector in observing and noting any warning signs of future problems that could be alleviated by preventive action.

System Inspectors must be honest in their approach to their work. Ethics should dictate that inspectors limit their practice to the type of systems they know and with which they are familiar. If inspectors wish to broaden their knowledge of different systems for the purposes of inspection, then

they should seek appropriate training that would qualify them to conduct inspections of the system of interest.

Infractions such as fraudulently or falsely filling out inspection reports or conducting fraudulent inspections will result in the System Inspector's approval being revoked. Such inappropriate behavior may also expose the System Inspector to personal liability to those who relied on the inspection report, or perhaps even to civil or criminal penalties. However, in the broader sense, all inspections should be conducted in a professional and respectful manner. The System Inspector is the frontline exposure that most people will have with the inspection process. If the experience is as trouble-free as possible, then a big battle for public acceptance of the necessity for inspections will have been won. Your positive performance is essential for the future of not only the inspection process but for your profession as well.